



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Mark 10: 32-45.

The disciples were on the way, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus went ahead of them. They were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. Taking the Twelve aside again, he began to tell them what was going to happen to him. "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles who will mock him, spit upon him, scourge him, and put him to death, but after three days he will rise." Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' He replied, 'What do you wish me to do for you?' They answered him, "Grant that in your glory we may sit one at your right and the other at your left." Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the chalice that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" They said to him, "We can." Jesus said to them, "The chalice that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right or at my left is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared." When the ten heard this, they became indignant at James and John. Jesus summoned them and said to them, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Introductory Prayer:

Once again, Lord, I come to you to pray. Even though I cannot see you, I trust that you are present and very much want to instruct me in your teachings. In the same way that you demonstrate your love for me by spending this time with me, I want to express my love for you by dedicating this time to you with a spirit of faith, confidence and attention. Here I am, Lord, to listen to you and respond with love.

Petition:

Lord, help me imitate your example of loving service.

1. Jesus Sets His Face Toward Jerusalem:

Jesus is walking ahead of his disciples, firm and determined. A few of those following him are growing uneasy, but James and John seem not to grasp the seriousness of the situation. Jesus is accompanied, but in a certain sense, he is alone. Again and again he has tried to explain to his followers that his mission will lead him to be rejected and mocked and eventually to suffer the cruelest of deaths. But they seem incapable of grasping the message; from their vantage point, none of this makes any sense. At times we, too, hear Christ's words about taking up our cross daily and losing our life for his sake, and we are either terrified at the prospect or its meaning eludes us. Jesus, however, continues inviting us to follow in his footsteps and carry our daily crosses with our eyes fixed on our heavenly home, the New Jerusalem.

2. The Ambitions of James and John:

James and John were hand-picked disciples of the Lord. Jesus had often allowed them to accompany him when he went off alone to pray. They both felt a deep affection for Our Lord, and so it is not surprising that they wished to be near him when he entered into his glory. Jesus doesn't reproach them for their petition even though it comes at a moment when his heart is burdened with deeper concerns. Rather, Jesus invites them to reflect on the consequences of their request. To be on Jesus' right and left in his glory means to pass through a similar trial as the one he must soon undergo — they would have to be situated on his right and left on the day he is lifted up on the cross. Jesus also invites us to "seek the things above" and place our ambitions on heavenly sights and not earthly glory. If our love for Jesus is true, then it must withstand the test of trial and suffering.

3. The True Meaning of Authority:

Most of us prefer to command than obey. Ambition quickly leads to rivalry and bitter feelings, as happened to the twelve apostles. Jesus quickly intervenes and gives us a valuable lesson on the meaning of authority, a lesson to be taken to heart. Authority of any kind has only one purpose: service. Do I view the authority that I have been given as a service? Am I more concerned about being obeyed — immediately and exactly — than about setting an example for others? How can I be more like Jesus in exercising my authority? Do I realize this is a specific way of picking up my cross and following after Jesus?

Conversation with Christ:

Jesus, help me to be zealous for the things of above. Do not allow my heart to be ambitious but rather be meek and gentle like yours.

Resolution:

I will seek to serve others no matter who they are.